



STATE OF INDIANA

Request for Information 16-014

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

On Behalf Of

**Indiana State Department of Health/Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Education**

For

Hearing Aid Assistance Program (HAAP)

Response Due Date: September 29, 2015

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Procurement Division
402 W. Washington St., Room W468
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued by the Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) on behalf of the Indiana State Department of Health/Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education (ISDH/CDHHE) to obtain information about potential solutions for the administration of the Hearing Aid Assistance Program (HAAP). Responses to the RFI will not be returned. The State of Indiana and the Indiana State Department of Health/Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education (ISDH/CDHHE) are not liable for any cost incurred by vendors in response to this RFI.

PURPOSE OF THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The purpose of this RFI is to gain information that will help ISDH/CDHHE determine the most innovative, cost effective, and efficient delivery model for disbursement of hearing aids to children deemed eligible according to the criteria established in Indiana Code 16-35-8. The information provided in the responses to this RFI may also be used to assist in the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) at a later date. However, the State reserves the right to award a contract directly from this RFI.

The information gained from this RFI may be used in the development of a competitive solicitation process, leading to the selection of a contractor that is best suited to provide the solution(s) that meets the ISDH/CDHHE requirements. The ISDH/CDHHE is interested in learning about all types of solutions available in the marketplace for disbursement and fitting of hearing aids for children. Respondents should provide full details about their solution in order for the ISDH/CDHHE to gain a clear understanding of the complete solution being proposed.

The ISDH/CDHHE may request in-person demonstrations from Respondents of this RFI for the purpose of collecting additional information and/or receiving clarification on proposal details. Invitations may be extended to Respondents of this RFI subsequent to the receipt of responses. The demonstrations will be conducted at the Indiana Government Center in Indianapolis, IN at a date to be determined after review of the proposal submissions.

BACKGROUND/CURRENT OPERATIONS

The Indiana State Department of Health through its Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education (CDHHE) provides oversight of the Hearing Aid Assistance Program, per Indiana Code 16-35-8. The program has been allocated \$375,000 per fiscal year (FY2016 and FY2017), which will be used to support administration of the Program, as well as actual hearing aid costs for qualified children. It has been determined that existing ISDH staff members, due to other duties, are unable to operate this program in a timely manner that is consistent with the legislation. Therefore, vendors are being sought to assist the State by providing programming to determine eligibility and disseminate hearing aids to qualified children.

The Department is exploring a model whereby three selected hearing instrument manufacturers, and specific hearing instrument models from each manufacturer, will be offered to qualified children. It is expected that the contractor will establish and manage relationships with these hearing aid companies that will include the ordering and purchasing of the approved hearing instruments. (The specific manufacturers and hearing instrument models were chosen specifically to meet criteria deemed important for pediatric recipients. See **Attachment A** for listing of approved hearing devices). The contractor will recruit licensed audiologists to register as participants in the HAAP program and although the specific dissemination process has not been determined, it is expected that each child's participating/personal audiologist will select the hearing instrument(s) to be fitted and the vendor will order from the manufacturer and disseminate them to the child's audiologist who will assume responsibility for the hearing aid fitting and follow up process. Should an applicant not have an ongoing relationship with an audiologist, the vendor will provide a list of all audiologists participating in the program.

In addition to recruitment of audiologists, it is anticipated that the contractor will promote HAAP statewide as a fund through ISDH CDHHE and include both ISDH and CDHHE logos in promotional materials.

It is also anticipated that the future contractor will develop and manage an application process for families seeking assistance through the HAAP that will include eligibility determination, selection and prioritization of potential candidates in accordance with the IC 16-35-8. This process would include verification of lack of insurance coverage, current medical clearance and audiogram (within previous six months), and recommendation from an audiologist. The contractor will keep an ongoing list of applicants in a HIPAA compliant manner, including status

and funding associated with application. In addition, the contractor will withhold the use of family information to promote non-related events and services or release private health information to third parties for any reason. The contractor will assist families with the application process and related activities.

The future contractor will be expected to communicate with ISDH/CDHHE regarding applications received, including those accepted, denied, appealed, as well as timelines and funding related to these applications. Furthermore, the contractor will provide the CDHHE with quarterly reports for each year of Fund activities.

In managing this fund, it is anticipated that the contractor will establish a billing system and ensure payments are made in a timely manner to audiologists and hearing aid companies participating in HAAP. In addition, this billing system would include book-keeping with regard to billing and funds used and available.

Acceptable delivery models will provide timely, cost effective and efficient procedures to allow the fitting of as many children as feasibly possible with reasonable/limited administrative costs.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

ISDH/CDHHE asks that all Respondents provide adequate details about their proposed solutions by addressing the following topics:

- 1) What type(s) of vendors would work best to manage HAAP? (For example, clinic, hearing instrument manufacturer or distribution firm, audiology practice) Why? What factors are potentially beneficial to each type? What concerns may arise (if any) with each type?
- 2) Based on the information provided, do you feel the proposed process is feasible (see Background/Current Operations)?
- 3) Describe a proposed cost structure including :
 - a. estimated device cost per child (including proposed warranty, loss and damage coverage, accessories, earmolds)
 - b. administrative and operating costs for the program
 - c. estimated associated audiologic costs including hearing aid fitting and follow up fees
- 4) Provide a “good faith estimate” of the numbers of children/hearing aids that could be provided annually (see attached list of approved hearing aids to facilitate your estimates) Propose a plan to meet capacity of that ‘good faith estimate’
- 5) Propose a process from initial application, through eligibility determination to hearing aid dissemination and discuss the estimated timeline and personnel needed for those processes.
 - a. Include in these processes a plan to assist families in completing the application process and related activities, including
 - i. Appeals process
 - ii. Locating audiologic services
 - iii. How to obtain application status
- 6) What previous experience with the hearing aid fitting process would be beneficial in terms of verifying private insurance and other 3rd party coverage for hearing instruments? Describe a plan for this process and for the cases where there is partial coverage for hearing aid fitting and the fund provides the difference in cost of the hearing aid(s)/ fitting.

- 7) What reporting procedures do you propose to use to inform ISDH/CDHHE of applications and fittings of hearing aids for individual children? Include a plan on how to share information on rejected applicants and terminated participants.
- 8) What are the important factors in the relationship between the vendor and Indiana-licensed audiologists? Hearing aid manufacturers?
- 9) Discuss how best to gather and maintain supportive paperwork in a HIPAA compliant manner. Propose a plan to ensure confidentiality so that:
 - a. Family information will not be used to promote non-related events and services
 - b. Private health information will not be released to third parties for any reason
- 10) What safeguards do you see necessary to ensure the vendor will not use child/family information gained through HAAP to recruit into vendor's own practice?
- 11) Propose a plan to promote HAAP statewide as a fund through the ISDH/CDHHE and include the ISDH and CDHHE logos on all promotional materials for this program
- 12) Propose a plan to provide necessary training to audiologists regarding HAAP.
- 13) Please describe if and how any potential subcontractors may be used in the proposed process.

PRICING

Please provide all-inclusive pricing for the solutions presented in your company's response to this RFI.

KEY RFI DATES

Below is a chart that contains all of the deadlines associated with RFI 16-014:

ACTIVITY:	DATE:
Issue of RFI	August 25, 2015
Deadline to Submit Written Questions	September 1, 2015
Response to Written Questions	September 8, 2015
Submission of Proposals	September 29, 2015

PROPOSAL DOCUMENTS SUBMISSION

All questions in regards to RFI 16-014 must be submitted in writing via email to Leslie Jones at Ljones@idoa.in.gov no later than **3pm EST on September 1, 2015**. The email subject line should contain the following phrase "RFI 16-014, Hearing Aid Assistance Program (HAAP)."

All responses must be submitted via email to Leslie Jones at Ljones@idoa.in.gov no later than **3pm EST on September 29, 2015**. The email subject line should contain the following phrase "RFI 16-014, Hearing Aid Assistance Program (HAAP)."

It is important to note that all information submitted in Respondents' responses to RFI 16-014 are subject to the Access to Public Records Act (APRA), IC 5-14-3 *et seq.*, and, after the contract award, the entire RFI file may be viewed and copied by any member of the public, including news agencies and competitors. Respondents claiming a statutory exception to the APRA must indicate so in the response submitted. Confidential Information must also be clearly marked in a separate (electronic) folder from the rest of the response. The Respondent must also specify

which statutory exception of APRA that applies. The State reserves the right to make determinations of confidentiality. If the Respondent does not identify the statutory exception, the Procurement Division will not consider the submission confidential. If the State does not agree that the information designated is confidential under one of the disclosure exceptions to APRA, it may seek the opinion of the Public Access Counselor. **Please be advised that prices are not confidential information.**